

Feedback: Departmental Bargaining Chamber - 21 October 2022

A Departmental Bargaining Chamber was held on 21 October 2022 and the following matters were discussed:

OHS compliance and COVID-19 regulations

The employer reported that 63 positive cases were reported, 62 recovered and one death since the start of COVID-19 in 2020. All COVID-19 protocols continue to be observed. It reported that about 135 employees were vaccinated until 30 September 2022. The employer circulated the departmental circular following DPSA Circular 38/2022, which repealed all COVID-19 protocols. It further encourages employees who have not yet been vaccinated to consider vaccinating. The PSA noted the report.

Organisational structure review

The employer reported that after MANCO's approval to review the organisational structure and in compliance with the MPSA letter, dated 17 May 2022, on compliance monitoring on the consultation of the review of the organisational structure by departments, the following tasks were accomplished:

- Appointment of the Task Team to oversee the review of the organisational structure
- Induction of the Task Team on its responsibilities was undertaken
- Introduction of the Task Team to all employees through HOT news
- Introduction of the project to the DBC
- Change management champions identified and change management training organised
- Communication plan was approved by MANCO
- Draft Terms of Reference were discussed and approved by the Director-General
- Project plan was agreed upon with the DPSA

On 19 September 2022, the departmental Organisational Development Team in the Directorate of Human Resource Management together with the Chief Director: Human Resources met with officials from the DPSA Operations Management Unit to discuss the configuration of Programme 1: Administration Functions of the Department. The DPSA took the team through the legislative frameworks that regulate the review of the organisational structure in the Public Service. There was overwhelming consensus on the following Organisational Design principles:

- That the departmental strategy must be informed by the electoral and legal mandate of the department
- The design of the organisational structure must be paved by an understanding of the approved strategy
- An organisational structure is not an end, but it is an implementing tool and a means to achieve a particular strategy and to drive improvements
- The design of the organisational structure must also be paved by an understanding of the documented business processes and service delivery model of the department
- The design should also take cognizance of the influential contextual factors and realities of the department such as geography, technology, environment, reporting, relationship, delegations, flexibility, and mobility of staff, as well as ethical conduct and risks
- The structure should ensure efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of scale in terms of unit costs and timeliness
- The principle of equal pay for work of equal value should be always taken into consideration

The PSA noted the report but registered discomfort about the employer's failure to arrange the Task Team meetings to deliberate more on the development of the organisational structure review. The employer committed to arranging a Task Team meeting soonest.

Employer's failure to fill vacant positions

The PSA tabled the matter following complaints from members concerning lack of capacity, which emanates from the employer's failure to advertise vacant positions in the department. The employer indicated that all avenues to secure funding from the National Treasury have been followed. It indicated that there was a meeting with branch heads to update them about the progress of filling vacant positions for two financial years, any post that will be vacant going forward will be filled immediately, owing to lack of capacity. The Chief Financial Officer indicated that about R1.9 million is available for this current financial year and consequently, six positions will be filled before the end of this cycle. It further indicated that there is R15 000 000 budgeted for the next financial year and that it will be able to fill 11 positions in the next cycle.

The PSA noted the report but requested the employer to put time frames on the planned filling of positions. The employer reported that six positions have already been advertised and candidates were interviewed. What is left is the appointment phase, which is anticipated to be finalised by December 2022. It reported that for the positions that fall in the next cycle, posts have been advertised, and shortlisting and interviews are to be finalised by January 2023 so that successful candidates can start working on 1 April 2023.

Departmental Policies

The employer reported that there are financial policies that were tabled in the DBC, which are still premature, therefore requested them to be withdrawn and to be re-introduced when ready. These policies are:

- Catering and Entertainment Policy
- Cellphone and Landline Policy
- Debt Policy

- Financial Delegations Policy
- Policy on Wireless Connection (3G/4G)
- Petty Cash Policy
- Subsidised Motor Transport Policy
- Integrated Rewards and Recognition Model
- Supply Chain Management
- Policy and Procedure on unauthorised, irregular expenditure

The PSA noted the request and members will be informed of developments.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA's website (www.psa.co.za), send an email to ask@psa.co.za, or contact PSA Provincial Offices.

GENERAL MANAGER